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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
May 31, 2005
CONFIRMATION HEARING

The Education Committee of the Nebraska Legislature convened on Tuesday, May 31, 2005 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 1525 at the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the appointment of Timothy Hodges to the Coordinating Commission on Postsecondary Education. Senators present: Ron Raikes, Chairperson; Dennis Byars, Vice Chairperson; Gwen Howard, Gail Kopplin, Vickie McDonald, Ron Raikes, Ed Schrock, and Elaine Stuhr. Senator absent: Patrick Bourne.

CONFIRMATION HEARING ON
TIMOTHY HODGES TO THE
COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

SENATOR RAIKES: Good morning, and welcome to this hearing of the Education Committee of the Nebraska Legislature--I would guess, maybe, our final one of this session. This is convened to consider the...or to have a hearing about a gubernatorial appointment for the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Let me quickly introduce to you the members of the committee, and it's a good show, I might say. To my far right--won't be here, is Senator Pat Bourne of Omaha. Senator Gail Kopplin, Gretna; Senator Elaine Stuhr; our committee's legal counsel, Tammy Barry; Ron Raikes, District 25; our esteemed--well, that might be a little stretch (laughter)--Vice Chair, Senator Dennis Byars of Beatrice; Senator Vickie McDonald of Fullerton? Come on.

SENATOR McDONALD: St. Paul.

SENATOR RAIKES: St. Paul, sorry. You faked me out. Gwen Howard is not here yet. Senator Gwen Howard from Omaha may be along soon. Senator Ed Schrock, Elm Creek; and then finally, Kris Valentin, our committee clerk. We will, I think, proceed. Our nominee, Tim Hodges, is here. So Tim, typically what we do is allow you to just comment a little bit on why you would like this job. I mean, I'd just start out. Did they really tell you what this job is like, and what (laughter)...

TIM HODGES: A little bit, yeah.

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SENATOR RAIKES: ...I see.

TIM HODGES: I'm a little nervous. This position has been open for a little while, so I don't know.

SENATOR RAIKES: I would see...to start out with, you have three, four references, three--Senator Phil Erdman's, Jim Krieger, and Connie Rath. I will say that the second...third of those I know and can speak well of. The first one I know. (Laughter) So with that, please, Tim, the floor is open to you.

TIM HODGES: Sounds good. Thank you for, first of all, for being here this morning, and I know we're coming off from a long weekend and the last week of session, and I wasn't sure for a while there, if we'd get this scheduled. And so thanks, Kris, for making that happen, and you all for being here this morning. My name is Tim Hodges. I live in Gretna, Nebraska, now, and have been there for about a year-and-a-half. I grew up in Nebraska City in production agriculture. My mom was a teacher, my dad farmed. My brother and lots of other family members are still down around Julian and Nebraska City area. And went to Nebraska City public schools throughout--well, I started out in, actually through eighth grade, in a rural school, and one-room schoolhouse, and then in eighth grade came to Nebraska City... (Laughter)

SENATOR STUHR: Inside joke.

TIM HODGES: ...and I won't go there any further. (Laughter) But then Nebraska City...

SENATOR RAIKES: Move to IPP. (Laughter)

TIM HODGES: ...and then came to the university, and then started at the University of Nebraska here in Lincoln. Did a bachelor's degree in agribusiness with a major in leadership education, and a master's degree in leadership education, and am finishing up a dissertation--or actually working on dissertation now--for a doctorate in leadership through the College of Business. So have been a student at the University of Nebraska since '96, on and off, mostly on. And started working at the Gallup Organization back in 2000 here in Lincoln for three years, and then moved up to Omaha

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with Gallup. My wife and I purchased a home in Gretna, and I work in downtown Omaha now. I've been excited about this opportunity since Jim Krieger actually mentioned it to me. And he said...he said, we're looking for someone on a...to work on the commission. And he says, I've heard about this through the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. They need someone from, I believe, it's southern Douglas County or from Sarpy County, and so you fit that description. And he said, there's only two other requirements. One is you need to be young, and one is you need to be innovative. So he said, if you're from the district and young, you've got two of the three, and the innovation thing we'll work on. But I've been involved with a lot of research around education and leadership over the past few years. I've published a few articles in referee journals, and a couple of book chapters, and presented it at some local, regional, and national conferences. And I really get excited about some of the innovative ways we can deliver an education, and in thinking about the state's education system, how we can coordinate efforts and eliminate some of the redundancy there and meet the needs of the students here in the state first, and then certainly, lots of things we can do to recruit students from outside the state, to decide Nebraska is their home. When I was a student at the University of Nebraska doing my undergraduate degree, I worked at the Office of Admissions, and worked with undergraduate student recruitment. And we brought in a lot of people. I was mostly focused on students that were to be in the honors program, so high ACT scores and great profiles coming in. And I also worked with a lot of students of donors and that kind of thing, and if we could get a student to show up in Nebraska on campus, we could almost always keep them. So I think there's certainly an appeal, and when students would walk on campus here or at other campuses in Nebraska, I know there's a lot of things we can do to keep them here. And so I get excited about that, and innovative ways of delivery. I've been involved with delivering courses over Blackboard and WebEx and other technologies that really work and really can help extend the borders of the state and tap into the faculty we have here, to really extend out. So those some of the ideas I have, and some of the reasons why I'm excited about this opportunity and would sure appreciate any questions or comments that you have.

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay, thank you, Tim. Questions for Tim?

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Comments? Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: I would just say congratulations. Your resume' looks very up to date, and it looks as if you've had a great deal of experience, and I'm excited to hear you say you want to keep the young people here in Nebraska, because I think that's something that we're all striving to do.

SENATOR RAIKES: Any...yes, Senator Byars, and then...

SENATOR BYARS: Just a comment. I think my son was leaving the Innocent's Society as you were coming into the university.

TIM HODGES: Um-hum.

SENATOR BYARS: And I know you have a close knit group, so...

TIM HODGES: Yeah, yeah.

SENATOR BYARS: ...I'll check on you. (Laughter)

TIM HODGES: Yeah, we can take a recess before you have to vote, to check that out. (Laughter)

SENATOR RAIKES: Senator McDonald.

SENATOR McDONALD: Well, and all I can say is I am very impressed with your education background.

TIM HODGES: Thank you.

SENATOR McDONALD: You've come a long ways.

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay, well, thank you, Tim, for your willingness to serve. Always late, Senator Schrock. (Laughter) By the way, Senator Gwen Howard has joined us.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Yeah, right. My presumption is that you credit most of your success to that one-room classroom (inaudible)? (Laughter)

TIM HODGES: Well, I certainly enjoyed that experience.

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SENATOR RAIKES: We actually didn't have time for that question. (Laughter)

TIM HODGES: I thought I'd throw that in there, just for fun this morning.

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay, well again, thank you for being here and for your willingness to serve in this position, Tim.

TIM HODGES: Absolutely. Thanks for your time.

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay. So do we have...

SENATOR STUHR: So moved.

SENATOR RAIKES: Pardon?

SENATOR STUHR: To go into...

SENATOR RAIKES: Well, we've got to have proponent testimony.

SENATOR STUHR: Oh. I'm really in a hurry.

SENATOR RAIKES:: Yes. Do we have proponent testimony? Opponent testimony? Neutral testimony? I see none, so the hearing is closed. And thank you again for being here, Tim.


Chairperson


Committee Clerk